

T R E

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2014

TREIN

*“Sharing is
the new owning.
We are sharing this
Trend Speech with you.
Now we own it,
together.”*

(The makers of the Trend Speech, 2013)

D R E D E 2014

This is the fourth Trend speech. Every year we pick up the common themes in the recent past and project them into the future.

This does not mean that we announce the next revolution every year. It means that we report on the latest steps on the revolutionary path. Sometimes these are little mouse steps, sometimes elephant steps. How is it going with the Netherlands? Are we good or are we bad? What do you think? We see that the glass is half full and that optimists as well as pessimists fanatically claim they are right. The fight for the truth is a writing on the wall. The Netherlands is in transition and the truth lies midway, with a bit of give and take. Only for a short while, though. Times are changing. The bastions of the past are about to be torn down. The community leaves the impression, for those who have a look at it superficially, that it is not really alive and kicking. There are even optimists who slowly show signs of pessimism due to opposing authorities, vicious financial flows and internal resistance. It is not always simple to break through established barriers.

*“If we open
a quarrel between
past and present,
we shall find that
we have lost
the future.”*

Winston Churchill (politician, 1874-1965)

A retaining reservoir full of innovation

We already wrote it in our previous trend speeches: the Netherlands innovates from the bottom up. Slowly a retaining reservoir materializes, a retaining reservoir full of innovation. Are all innovative ideas going to break through? This depends on the old dam, made up of rules and restrictions on which the ideas push with an increasing force. The belief in capacity of the ancient world to solve things has disappeared. Although from different sides there is a lobby going on to keep up the appearance of being in charge. Whether it is about politics, healthcare, education or the financial world: we allow the already existing because we are not yet convinced that we have better options.

In search for real progress

We consider every change that touches our style of unlimited consumption as an impoverishment. Our natural impulse to 'more' appeared to be a fertile lying-in room for efficient standardisation, minimisation of costs and maximising of profits. To think efficiently a form of intelligence is needed that is focused on reproducing data accurately instead of doubting information. By doing this we have dulled the average employee into a producing person, who spends half his time on filling in forms that check his efficiency.

At the same time his creative and his yearning to innovate have been offset. In many ways the human being loses from his own creation: the Technology. In the near future the smartest person in the room is the room itself, The only one that has a total overview. 'We shape our tools and afterwards our tools shape us', Marshall McLuhan once said. The most salient result is the rise of the technological unemployment: we create more jobs for machineries and software than we do for people according to a report of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

Complexity as a right to exist

The goal of standardization and efficiency are way beyond us. National ombudsman/mediator Alex Brenninkmeijer states in his annual report 'My incomprehensible government' that citizens don't understand the government any longer; and maybe worse, the government doesn't understand its citizens. The Board for living environment and infrastructure (RLI) states in its report 'unlimited shelf life' that nature policy has become too complicated and too, technological. We have created a world in which adding complexity has become a survival strategy. Complete sectors draw their right to exist from the complexity of our social system. New

organizations need to help us find our way in bureaucracy and regulations. This way the Social Hospital helps people who have ended up in a bureaucratic hell.

Doing right by thinking differently

In the meantime consumers think that they need to check everything themselves, from the ingredients in the so-called handcraft grandma's applesauce to the tags in our designer jacket, which could come, just like that, from a collapsed clothing factory (sweat shop). The dominant sentiment is that many organizations have become big by doing wrong. We have lost our faith in decency and truth. The lack of trust is the real crisis because it throws sand in a running engine. Fortunately the social trust starts from scratch again by smaller companies that are quite close to us. The gaps created by the bigger companies, are filled successfully by smaller companies and thus creates its own eco-system fed by people who think likewise. It is an era in which tearing down and building up are done simultaneously. It has become the time for those who want to do right by putting their spanner in the works. For companies which want to do right instead of doing less worse. The new era that presents itself focuses on changing the rules instead of exceptions to the rule. Focuses on cooperation instead of burdened patents.

System elastics

New technology, a changed environment and a richer human consciousness carry numerous opportunities, which don't fit within restrictive frames and thus clash hard with the old. Existing structures start to stumble and laws are not obeyed. thuisafgehaald.nl is considered unfair competition for restaurants, parents involved in childcare (OPCs) cannot be allowed because they don't have certified personnel. Private room renter windu.nl is being chased because of false competition in the hotel sector. Restrictions and laws are maintained strictly. It is remarkable though that we laugh about our forefathers' resistance with regard to changes such as steam engine, the telephone and the airplane. That is what ground-breaking inventions do, they break through existing boundaries in our community. However now that we are confronted with the consequences of mass consumption and digitalization we drag our heels in the sand again. What we need is system elastics. To let flow the retaining reservoir of innovations the easing and changing of existing systems, structures and rules are a necessity.

From check to perspective

What we retrieve from all new initiatives in the Netherlands is: give us meaningful growth. Let money play its supporting role, bridging the differences instead of taking The central place as the motor of our economy. This is a prelude to the time in which we realize growth that is in harmony with nature and its surrounding. We will never ever see radical changes if we keep building on our old presumptions of 'progress'.

Due to years of conditioning we have interpreted the definition in a wrong way, as a growing economy, more consumption and a higher Gross Domestic Product. The real progress that we can and have to realize is doubting and tearing down our well-conditioned behavior. There lies the biggest social and human profit/ advantage. We need to go from check to perspective. 'Creative destruction' Joseph Schumpeter called it in the previous century. Only by tearing down the old you make room for the new.

FEEDBACK

TRENDS

Technolotopia

New technology offers us means to build a world which makes the old one superfluous. The cyber utopian attitude characterizes itself by the conviction that technology is going to solve all our problems. Apps figure out whether someone is suffering from a depression. Cars drive themselves and robots you can print at your home for less than €1000. A doctor is assisted from the other side of the world by Google Glass. But the opposite is also true. By combining technology and the human body, hackers can do more than just steal. If they hack a satellite than they can also certainly hack a pacemaker. And: the current economic depression makes it very attractive to adapt technology from an old paradigm. The consequence is a digital dilemma, from Prism to Cocoon, Donotrackme and JustDeleteme. The biggest challenge humanity has, is not technology but adaptation. Are we going to adapt new technological opportunities from an existing paradigm of consumption and control or from human measure and balance.

The sharing generation

The generation that grows up in the middle of all this boosts the balance engine. They are used to the fastness of the technological developments. They want to build a world that connects better with the current network society. A part of them becomes frustrated because they get stuck by their ambitious wish list, or by too many choices in a world in which being busy has become a status symbol. Yet we see that the fear of missing out (FOMO) more often becomes the joy of missing out (JOMO). Not everything you can do needs to be done, says a large group of youngsters. They embrace the share and borrow economy. They consider possessions less important. They appreciate more the daily access to products and services. That is why the percentage of car owners in the age of 18 and 29 has decreased from 24% to 16% in Amsterdam. Access to technology and the financial reset of the past few years feed the sharing economy. De Vereniging voor Gedeeld Autogebruik (The community of Shared Car use) supports neighbours and friends when collectively buying and using a car. The fact that the human being is social and thus by nature willing to share, is also a popular theme in biology and psychology. In the future we will look back at our current time as an interesting turning point in history. The difference between pessimists and optimists is the frame from which they think. Those who want to understand the optimistic signals need to put on fundamentally different glasses. For what we experience now is the transition in the direction of a revolutionary social energy source. The success of the initiatives that break the pattern in our country, show how widely the new energy is being adopted.

You hear it on all levels in society. Let us look together beyond this transition time at the new reality.

Thinking of the Netherlands, we see a retaining reservoir full of innovation, barely held together by a fence of regulations. The status quo is one of disruption, chaos and uncertainty. The question remains what route the energy will follow now that things become less tight. There is definitely a flow in the Netherlands. The only problem is that the flow cannot find its way. The Zeitgeist is in the sign of small improvements against the big system. It is time to ignore the rules and just see in what direction we are going. In this fourth trend speech we are in search of growing flows.

*“If you change
the way you
look at things,
the things you
look at change.”*

Wayne Dyer (psychologist, 1940 -)

Self-organizing cross connections

We are going through a chaotic transition which has been driven by a velvet revolution. It is not about armored ideals which are shouted aloud through a megaphone during mass demonstrations. The big collective is no longer the natural eco system for the individual. Rather than this an own eco system is formed for every opportunity or problem. The individual makes a connection with kindred spirits and simply passes by precooked systems. The big story of the future is told in short sentences, is whispered from person to person. If we look at innovative ideas with these glasses on, then we see how everything falls into place. The new structure of the story can clearly be seen in

the hotel sector. It was not that long ago that we made a choice whether to camp or take a hotel. Now we think: I want to camp but not on a camping site. Thus we set up our tent in a city park or in the backyard of a nice inhabitant (campinginmygarden.com). AirBnB.com will be bigger than Hilton in 2014. There is no umbrella movement, no clear leader, no public relations company that sells the story. There are only connections between individuals.

'Individual Strength' as a source

It is a writing on the wall that people everywhere are looking for the heart of the matter. Of this we have lost sight by putting the emphasis on all quarterly messages and responsibility protocols. It is for a reason that there is a lot of attention for craftsmanship and personal driving forces. Those who cannot sail along with the collective, need to go back to their own source. From meeting the expectations we move in the direction of personal meaning. This is exactly the reason that 'Individual strength' is one of the most used concepts of our time. The highest form of status is to have and offer significant meaning. To ask youngsters what they want to become is considered old-fashioned. We don't become something. We are already someone. Better is to ask: 'what is your strength' or 'how to retrieve meaning from your talent?' In education much attention is spent on defining and checking final requirements. Unfortunately not much attention is paid on training and testing how innovative someone is and on 'lifelong learning'. That is why new eco systems fill this gap.: massive open online courses e.g. or MOOCs. Next month The University of Holland starts with lectures delivered for free by professors.

The revolution of the self

What is the new paradigm, or let us call it differently, the new source energy that we see well up in our society? Self-organization. It sounds self-evident and at the same time inevitable. Self-organization is a logical sequel to the wave of individualization. The crucial change is this: we no longer go with the collective flow resuscitation, we make sure that the collective flows around us on our path in life. We create our own flexible and often temporary collective. The new starting point is that everyone builds his own personal eco system and tries to keep it healthy as well as possible. The depth of this social revolution cannot be emphasized enough. All the institutions that we have called to life to bundle the interests of citizens are being threatened in their existence. It all seems to become less at this moment but eventually it will surface that we receive a new worth instead. The energy no longer comes from the big collective but from ourselves. Self-organization is the source energy of our society.

Sharing is receiving

The last couple of years, the fear is articulated that together with the bath water also the remains of solidarity are washed away. Humanity would lose itself in exorbitant selfishness in which only self-interest counts and in which citizens become competitors. The crisis, however, has taught us that many of our goals cannot be reached without connections. Thus we will not flourish without others. The world is not only about us as an individual, although we would love it to be. The world turns its own circles. Sometimes it is all right and sometimes it is not. We need to share in order to receive. The unruly 'I' of the past now chooses to connect. No connection from the point of view of dependency but from individual strength. Starting with meaning instead of control.

Making connections yourself

Those who can look beyond all the chaos of this transition see that self organization delivers the frames in which new success formulas arise. The success of Buurtzorg (a company for community care) and Eigen Kracht Centrales (Individual Power Stations) but also RepairCafe.nl or HetKanWel.nl buzzes around in society and politics. But the turning point goes further than just the welfare state. While public service broadcasting is merging not without complaints, viewers quit and go to 'viewing on demand' and 'binge viewing', to watch as many episodes as you like. Why wait for a collective offer of a club whose mission you have forgotten, when you can organize it yourself? We organize things ourselves more often. We make our own connections, which don't go from top-down to bottom-up but move sideways. The new era is the time of self-organizing cross connections.

Technology, the big facilitator

The highest common factor disappears and with this the power of general wisdom, rules and protocols. We now experience the chaos in which individuals feel they are the exception to the rule all the time. Eventually we conclude that there are no exceptions to the rule because no one is exactly average and no average does right to the unique eco system around the individual. Not presumptions regarding the behaviour of groups (age, lifestyle, sex) but actual activity of the individual is the benchmark for policy. We can make this movement for the first time in history. Big Data helps to build a policy with the individual as a starting point and to make connections where they could not be made in the past. The promise of Scanadu,

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a miniscanner that measures important physical data daily, is for example that people take their own health in their hands. This way they can learn by doing how character, location, activity, nutrition and medicine altogether influence the body.

Realistic positivism

We can say that there is progress and growth, only that progress is not necessarily financial. The emphasis is more on autonomy, authenticity and meaning. Values that are not easy to weigh but that represent a great value for people who have it. Peer to peer borrowing is a growth market worldwide. Parents who have savings but hardly receive any interest, pay the mortgage of their children. Via Kickstarter, which started in 2009, half a billion has been invested. Why shouldn't you invest part of your savings in ideas that attract you personally, whether that is high end cow milk free ice-cream by Professor Grunschnabel, wind farms in the North Sea or Extraordinary Pigs. In the field of sustainability The Planet Fund is quite successful. There is a demand for cheap money borrowed in confidence, invested from a realistic optimism. People organize their own money and support by making smart connections. Internet is the vehicle. Virtual social networks are the movement. Together they lead to a 'creator' revolution. Production, communication and distribution fall free and are reinvented by means of technology (the 3D printer for example) and kept in their own hands. 25 million people trade their own art or creative products via Etsy. Together it is almost a billion dollars. That is not a small shop anymore.

Connection is not a bandage

We are not only positive about self-organizing cross connections as a new social energy source. Every innovation has its disadvantages. Social media dig connecting channels and make the communication environment more human. But they also facilitate a darker side of human interaction; They visualize how strong we judge each other. Research shows that the more contact people have on Facebook, The lonelier they feel. 'A related term is 'entertainment void'. It turns out that life consists of more than collecting as many 'likes' as possible: in a community in which everything has to be entertainment, the necessary but not entertaining projects are not being dealt with. Sometimes the emphasis on the own responsibility of people and their connections in daily life conveniently covers the fact that we need to cut down. Instead of individual strength we talk about self-reliance. The connection is then no more than a bandage. Using your own strength is something totally different than letting people mess around and offer emergency aid when it really goes wrong. The basis for a good policy is definitely the strength of the individual: It starts with what people can instead of what they cannot do. From now on we ask: What can you organize yourself and where do you need help?

In the end everything falls in its place. The Netherlands is drawn into an era of self-organizing cross connections. The fundamental revolution is taking place in the minds of the people. The coming years are about consciousness and acceptance of a new energy source. The new world grows organically. It is the transfer of power of the institution towards self-organization and the cross connection that controls innovation. From the perspective of self-organization we create new materials that together from a fluid eco system.

*“Some men like to
make a little garden
out of life and walk
down a path.”*

Jean Anouilh (playwright, 1910-1987)

Fluid eco systems

In the second part of the Trend Speech the new social energy source took a central part in the shape of self-organizing cross connections. In this third part we discuss in more detail how this silent revolution unfolds itself. Cross connections dispel linear thinking and introduce us to circular thinking. From deathly frames to new vital eco systems. This is how new materials grow within society, a dynamic en fluid material which organizes itself at certain moments to be successful and also dissolves easily. Temporary occasional coalitions ask for temporary occasional regulations. The new eco systems ask for different qualities such as trust, transparency, sustainability and reciprocity. Those who want to connect with people from right to left and from back to front need social skills. And a different language. We need to leave the well-known but difficult path of strategic views, future proof solutions, moving from best practices right into a strategic plan and return on investment. Innovation originates from an idea. An idea, not an ideal, an idea not an ideology.

The pathway as an anchor

We don't look any longer in awe towards authorities. We look around us openly. We step out of static systems and form dynamic connections. We leave the idea of one linear road that leads us in the direction of improvement and innovation. The path towards the future is not a long march straight ahead but a network. There is no clear beginning and end. There is no start or finish. There are only knots and connections between them. There are no direct technological production lines but round, natural, organic en biological, even holistic ways. No direct lines and matrixes, but circles and spirals, above all cycles of life and death of rising and starting again. The underlying need is to ignore the rules temporarily in order to search optimistically and with confidence for a new flow direction. Working from the perspective of dynamic directions implies admitting uncertainty, accepting that we will not know everything but will only be able to indicate a pathway without a tight structure. As the current frames have focused on eliminating mistakes, pathways offer the

chance to steer, to practice, to fail and to learn. The dynamics of the process and the temporary connection take the place of anchored certainties. Not the anchor but the pathway needs to give us guidance.

Asynchronous reciprocity

The better the cooperation, the more valuable the immaterial reward in the form of social capital. Cooperation is a form of reciprocal reward. Value is often created without money being involved. In the old systems we call that 'free'. A better definition is reciprocity. Only traditional organizations can give something away for free, and then it is literally gone. In a reciprocal organization something that is been given for free, always comes back. You only don't know exactly when, where or in which form. Asynchronous Reciprocity we call it. People help each other in exchange for acknowledgement, status or just because it is fun. New eco systems grow because of intangible values, of social capital. Clay Shirky launched The Great Spare Time Revolution: instead of losing time on unilateral consumption such as watching television, people rather like to make an active connection and thus contribute to eco systems of their preference. A new trend takes shape: people who like to create sustainable values via one- off formations on a basis of equality. That is why the economic limitations disappear which were applied in the past. Value creation by means of social networks means that we are no longer tied to traditional economic limitations such as time, place and means.

From Big Brother to Kafka?

Knowledge used to be the key to improvement. In a time when there is an abundance of atomic knowledge, no one knows the truth anymore. The capacity lacks to turn the abundance of atomic knowledge, which is available everywhere into a useful formula. Those who read about Prism or about plans in which the Dutch police and justice, without mediation of a judge, can break into a computer to add or change documents, will probably scratch behind their ears.

In the TV show 'Zomergasten' (Summer Guests) Professor Beatrice de Graaf explained that we are too fast in saying that we have nothing to hide. We underestimate the impact of the data revolution. The risk that the wrong algorithms are used on the wrong questions, will increase strongly the coming years. Our fear should not be Big Brother but The Trial by Kafka: that we are being accused of something without knowing why and on the basis of which information. In the meantime headstrong thinkers and doers create software that makes sure that we can manage our own data. Google has become the new wall. Not Prism is the future but Prism Break- the set of protection technologies with which you can control your own data and privacy.

From makeability to 'make something out of it'

The makeability of things is growing incredibly. The makeability of people has it's limits. Parents and advertising have indoctrinated children that they can do and become whatever they want, that they can make their lives perfect if only they really go for it, that everything is possible. Thus children are stuck with a perfection illusion. We forecast that there will come an end to the makeability ideal. It doesn't make us happy to strive for a perfect life, mainly because we will always fail perfection. Author Arnon Grunberg writes in the newspaper 'De Volkskrant': 'The problem of modernity is that there is no room for destiny, the tragic. Something sad happens and we expect the government to immediately take measures to avoid this from

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ever happening again. That is naïve. We live on a tragic planet which means that there are powers stronger than us. We need to accept this.' Opposite Individual Strength we still find Force Majeure. The assignment for the coming years is to make the things that are makeable and to accept the things that are not achievable. We see the rise of a new 'Que Sera' movement.

The grand letting go

This is the start of the grand letting go. Young people don't need a car, people in their thirties don't need a career. Old people don't want reanimation. Not any more we say 'make your own life!' Instead the saying becomes 'make something out of the life that you've been given!' It is not important what happens to you but what you do with it. From checking to improvising. In the future the government will let go of checking everything and hand over decisions to the self-organizing citizen. It will not maintain bankrupt hospitals but accepts takeovers by involved specialists and other employees and supports small housing corporations in non-growing areas managed by the villages themselves such as example Operation Fryslantis. In the meantime libraries in the province of Brabant have started a readers' program that is called 'practising for a different time'. A suitable title. In his book 'Anti Fragile' professor Riskmanagement Nassim Nicholas Taleb states: the more complex societies become, with more specialization and the cream of the crop in regulations, the more vulnerable for collapse they become. Those who practice resilience, according to Taleb, will become less vulnerable for performance anxiety and will learn by trial and error how to cope with the unexpected events and the uncontrollable natural phenomena that characterize our world.

Cross connections

'Overview and cooperation, with a eye for an efficient process, these are strong characteristics of the Dutch', says Kees-Jan Bandt of Royal HaskoningDHV. His company notices a strong increase in the number of international projects. 'The moment a problem becomes more complex, people are looking for advice. The Dutch are considered successful on integral solutions, combining urban planning, infrastructure, environment, accessibility, planning and the economic aspects of a project.' Especially the experience that every project starts with research and consultation is internationally noticed. In the nineties the Netherlands was praised for its polder model. We now see a future for a New Dutch Model. Cross connection is the strength which can make the Netherlands big. Cross connection means that you consider the whole and create a dynamic connection, starting from your own strength and a shared feeling of direction. If necessary beyond borders.

Our country has a flourishing economy, an incredible number of intelligent people and a fantastic infrastructure. Everywhere in the Netherlands surprising cross connections and new eco systems arise. The flow widens. A retaining reservoir containing innovations is waiting for a breakthrough. People are practising. They prepare themselves for a new era, building from their own energy source. Everyone is connected, all connections give meaning to a chance or problem and form the eco system in which we advance the future. Those who look through these glasses see a strong fabric, a organic texture, that, thanks to many cross connections, has strength and an inventive power. This way we pave the way for not only a fresh look at today's problems but especially at tomorrow's chances.

Colophon

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